

I. The World of Learning at the Feet of the King of Truth.

These Magi were the learned men of their day. Why should they worship thus at the feet of this helpless babe? The answer is fully given more than thirty years later. After Jesus has loved and served his generation, he stands alone at Pilate's bar. "Art thou a king?" is the insistent question. Hear the calm answer of him who wears the crown of thorns: "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Need we wonder that these searchers after truth should worship before him who is the King of Truth?

There is a current idea that Jesus is the peculiar possession of the poor, of the ignorant, of the lowly, this is false. He is theirs, but none the less does he come to the rich, to the learned, to the lordly with an offer of salvation and a demand for service.

Strikingly is this portrayed in the scenes that mark his birth. Ignorant, lowly shepherds, learned, princely Magi, together rejoice and together worship at his feet.

John, in his life of the Master, has emphasized the same truth, placing side by side two wondrous pictures. Christ and Nicodemus. Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

Mark has uttered the far-reaching words, so often misunderstood, "and the common people heard him gladly." The margin of the Revised Version reads "the great multitude."

Yes, the Son of Man has a message for all sons of men: for the rich as well as the poor, for the high as well as the lowly, for Nicodemus as well as the Samaritan woman, for the Wise Men of the East as well as the Shepherds of Judea.

When they recognize the origin and the end of truth, the wise men worship at his feet. Our peril is not too much but too little learning. We fail to look back to the source of truth and forward to its purpose—when students are content with speculative philosophy and empirical science regardless of the source and purpose of truth they may be learned and Christless. But when the scientist sees behind his system, God—and when the philosopher realizes that truth is for life's sake—Jesus Christ becomes the supreme reality in human history, the great dynamic of human progress, the matchless teacher of men. He claims to be the King of Truth: truth as the utterance of God, truth as the basis of life.

Need we wonder that the Magi worshipped at his feet or that through the ages the holy succession has been preserved?

From the hour that yonder Syrian star stood over Bethlehem until today there have ever been wise men worshipping at his feet.

The scene upon which we look reveals in symbol the world of learning at the feet of the King of Truth.

II. The Vision Granted in the Sphere of Service.

These Magi were astrologers, whose business it was to study the stars. From the pages of their chosen

text-book God taught them His higher truth. Thus ever is his way.

The shepherds were watching their sheep when the angel came. The fishermen were mending their nets when the Master called. The tax-gatherer was sitting at his receipt of customs when the command was uttered, "follow me."

As he finds men in their place of service, so he teaches them in the language of their daily lives. The fisherman sees new truth in the dragnet, the farmers in the seed-sowing, the merchant in the pearl, the woman in her breadmaking. The kingdom of heaven is all about us; let us open our eyes.

We shall lose a precious truth if we think of the star as a thing apart from the daily life of these wise men. Being students of the stars, God taught them thus.

He teaches men in many ways.

We shall fall very short of our privilege if we wait for some message written in fire upon the heavens, calling us to larger knowledge of truth. Our star will be in the sphere of daily life and service.

It may be in the court of justice, in the chamber of sickness, in the hall of learning, in the marts of trade, in the quiet ministries of home that the higher light will come to you. It is your star; it leads to Bethlehem.

To you, lawyers, as you deal with crime may come the vision of him who deals with guilt. To you, physicians, who seek to cool the fevers that consume our frame, may come the vision of him who heals the fevered soul. To you, teachers, who are seeking truth, may come the vision of him who taught as one having authority. To you, business men, in the restless exchange of perishing values may come the longing for riches that are eternal. To you, mothers, and fathers, sobered by the responsibility and sanctified by the holy influence of the earthly home may come the yearning for the Father's house.

To each it is your star: it shines in the place of daily service: it leads to Bethlehem.

III. A Living Faith that Follows the Light.

When the Magi entered Jerusalem they asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"—then they added, "we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him."

Where is he? We have seen his star. We are come to worship.

What, if they had seen the star, but known not whose it was; if they had received the heavenly symbol and known not where to turn for its interpretation? Knowledge is the hand maiden of inspiration, as it leads into a living faith. These wise men knew the promises of God, the expectation of Israel—and thus the star was more to them than a heavenly wonder.

Having the vision of the star and the knowledge of the promise, they obeyed the call of privilege and journeyed toward Jerusalem. They might have tarried in their own land: then they could have said: "We have seen"—but not "we are come."

These, my friends, are lessons for you and me. Their star is a symbol of God's call to us, their knowledge of the promise teaches the use of revealed religion